

# All Prisoners and Captives

By VIRNA SHEARD

THE Litany of the Church of England is—if only viewed as a piece of literature—so beautiful a thing that it is small wonder the learned and polished gentlemen of the pulpit read it aloud with pleasure. When it is given a fine setting on the fragrant calm of a summer Sunday morning, it is easy enough to understand the reader being uplifted on the wings of a purely esthetic delight—even should nothing deeper carry his soul heavenward.

Given the cool sun-shot silence of a cathedral—the dappled colours from painted windows sprinkled against grey stone and carven wood, the dim spaces between high arches, almost as sweet scented and seductive as the airy spaces between forest trees—the dusky gold of the pipes of music, the white of lawn and black of cassock touched into life here and there by purple and red, the apparently purified faces of a worshipping people and the pink and white beauty of boy singers, their voices akin to no other human voices—but of an alien and unearthly quality. Given all this it is not strange that a man ritualistically inclined should occasionally be swept away on a river of sound—the said sound being that of his own mellifluous voice intoning a combination of words so compelling and emotional that they stir even the most worldly of hearts.

The responses of the people swaying him in supplication takes him irresistibly onward through the pathetic petitions to the great culmination at the very close.

This prayer must surely reach to heaven, coming as it does from so many lips every Sunday morning, and led by the intense voices of so many white-souled men of "The King's Church."

And yet—I have wondered. A certain phrase of the Litany would return again and again to my mind one Sunday when, after the benediction, we all went out into the summer sunshine.

I did not want it to return—but like the Ghost in Macbeth, it would not "down." The homeward-turning people wearing their "homeward" faces were enough to banish it, one would have thought.

They were all so outwardly satisfactory, and the homeward-turned face was so content. It is undeniably different from the churchward-turned face. Often it expresses a subtle satisfaction, generally a mild relief. A person cannot note it and think there are at present many who would really enjoy a heaven such as we used to sing of in the old, devout hymn, "Where Congregations ne'er break up nor Sabbaths have an end."

That hymn has outlived its usefulness, very largely.

The service over a delectable mid-day meal looms near, and following on its heels a long, warm, golden afternoon of dreamy pleasure and peace. The faces express anticipation, at least.

But that little persistent sentence came back, while I watched them. It rang like a bell somewhere in my brain. A melancholy bell turned to a minor key. A tiresome bell.

"And show Thy Pity—Upon All Prisoners—and Captives."

God in Heaven! What it must mean to be a prisoner, on a mid-summer day! What it must mean to be a captive! To know that the earth is abloom, to feel the call of the woods and water—the fascination and enticement of it all from behind bars.

"And show Thy Pity." The street was so sunny, the passing people so pleasant and smiling;

"On all Prisoners and Captives." Were there really any in all the world on this radiant Sunday? Living things shut up? Kept away from the freedom of the air and green earth and wide water—were there really any?

FAINTER and farther off sounded the minor bell; fainter and still farther off. And then right above my head came the singing of a robin. I looked up, for there were no trees near by.

He was in a cage hung out of a window—a little cage against the bars of which he had broken his feathers—but he sang. It was the April song everyone knows. The flute-like notes of it come to us in the earliest spring dawn; we hear it in the rain sometimes and sometimes even in the moonlight. I listened to him until I passed out of hearing.

"And show Thy Pity upon all Prisoners and Captives," the bell sounded again.

"Captives?" O yes there are Captives. Many of them. I realized it now. Out in the parks they are kept in stone-paved prisons and great cages.

Bears—grizzly bears, who love the still places in the hills; the wooded, green, quiet places where berries grow and where they can hide in the underbrush and trouble no man, and belong to themselves.

Polar bears, fretting in the heat and longing wordlessly for the blue-white reaches of snow and ice, and the twilight that is blessed to their eyes.

WOLVES and coyotes, untameable and unhappy—the very tramps and vagabonds of the wilds—these are shut into spaces a few feet wide; perhaps they are the most pitiful of all, these loveless beasts that will not accept their fate or come to the bars to eat from your hand, but draw back shudderingly and hate you with their eyes.

And there are the elephants, the queer, left-over things that are like the big, crude, unfinished beasts made when, as Kipling says, the world was "so new and all."

The elephants that have survived while all their friends and relations passed on. Who wouldn't be

sorry for the captive elephants? Long ago there was a tiny verse in *St. Nicholas*,

"An elephant to a city came,  
Poor old elephant!  
And all day long he would stand and dream  
Of the jungle shade—and the jungle stream,  
Poor old elephant!"

It went something like that. I know I always think of it when I see one of those huge, crumpled-looking fellows rocking softly backward and forward, one queer leg bound with the leg-iron and held fast to a stake in the ground. He is such a strong thing to be held meekly there; he belongs so altogether to the wild, free days of the old world, when might was right, and strength, physical strength alone, ruled.

"And show Thy Pity," rang the little bell.

There is a great cage out at the Bronx, New York, where once I saw some eagles. One thought is always associated with the eagle. It is the thought of liberty. The eagle is the very emblem of freedom. His home is on the mountain crag and at the edges of rocky sea walls. He knows and loves the far places where no man can follow, and his flight is wonderful and beautiful beyond words. His eyes

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## Occasionalities

By J. W. BENGOUGH

IT is reported that Harry Lauder is going to run for Parliament. In the meantime, while he is finishing his career on the vaudeville stage, he ought to have a characteristic song on the subject. I venture to submit something that might suit him:

WHEN I GET INTO PARLIAMENT, YE KEN!

Ye've maybe heard the news that's goin' about—

A'm goin' to rin for Paurliament, ye ken;

A've got a new ambection

To tak' a high posection

Among the Breetish Empire's public men;

Ye've seen it in the papers, I suppose,

An' so the gospel truth it's sure to be;

I'll retire frae Music Halls an' Vaudeville Shows

An' write the letters to ma name—M.P.

Spoken—Aye—A' hae the maitter under ma serious consideration the noo. But it's no a nice thing for folk to say that A'm wantin' to be a member o' Paurliament because A'm noo a laird wi' plenty o' silla like ma freen' Andra Carnagie an' the ithers. That's what A' ca' a slander. Ma ambection is no' a selfish thing. A'm feelin' the ca' o' public duty, that's what it is—

Chorus—

There's mony things to do,

An' A'll help to pit them through,

When once A'm ane o' Britain's leadin' men;

At nicht an' matinee

Heid-liner A' wull be,

When I get into Paurliament, ye ken.

To get the seat A' only need to rin—

In fack, A' winna' need to mair than walk,

The thing's beyond a doot,

They couldna' keep me oot—

Wi' the masses A'm as solid as a rock.

Whichever pairty was to pit me up

Would make nae diff'rence, folk would vote for me;

A' wouldna' need to treat to bite or sup,

Or itherwise to squander a bawbee!

Spoken—Hech! Just so. Ye see, it's no the expense that would haud me back. A' could stand that a' richt, for there wouldna' be ony to me, pearsonally. An' when A'm in, A'll get the laws passed that we're needin'—mair wages to comic singers for a'e thing, an' Home Rule for Scotland. A' wull rise an' say, Mister Speaker-r-r-r!

There's mony things to do

An' I'll help to pit them through—

Etc., etc., etc.

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This is certainly an unjust world. Take it in the distribution of honour and fame, for example. We know of an editor right here in our own country who has for years slang-whanged his political opponents, in an honest effort to build up a national reputation for keen wit. He regularly calls Sir James Whitney "the old Bourbon," and Premier Borden "old putty-spine," and applies equally brilliant abusive epithets to other public men, but so far the only result is that he is regarded as suffering from a poverty of ideas. But look at Henri Rochefort, late of Paris. He is being extolled as the

founder of a new journalism, who achieved world-wide fame through the sharpness of his editorial thrusts. Some of the epithets he invented for political enemies are quoted as gems of biting humour, as "the old drunkard," "the old crocodile," "our national farmer," "our national wine-grower" and "our piano-playing war minister." These phrases do not strike us as being superior to the Ontario editor's. Why, then, this rank partiality in the handing out of bouquets? But perhaps there was something more to Rochefort's journalism than the labels which, we are told, "caught the public fancy and fired the imagination of the multitude."

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"A man may chat, but a woman only chatters."—Eminent medical authority in current controversy.

By Jove, old man, I've noticed that;

Ethel, for instance, cannot chat

On any sort of matter;

Although she has an easy flow

Of language, yet—well—don't you know,

It isn't chat, it's chatter!

She's awf'ly nice, but it's too bad

When such a girl takes up a fad

And runs to pitter-patter

On suffrage, hygiene, and such rot—

It's wearing on a fellow—what?

Why can't she chat—not chatter?

Love her? Oh, rather! Like the deuce!

But on such subjects I'm no use;

My brains all seem to scatter;

But she won't have a decent chat

On dancing, tennis, golf and that—

She can't—jusy bally chatter!

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We read that there will doubtless be formal honours extended by the United States Government and navy to Prince Albert of Monaco on his early anticipated visit to the Republic. The gentleman may be very thankful that he wears a title, otherwise, as King of the Monte Carlo gambling resort, he might have received attention only from the police. As it is, we may presume that the navy will fly the *rouge et noir* colours.

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Our greetings to the learned gentlemen of the Geological Convention. Our city is honoured by them coming, and although we are aware that the finding of faults both normal and major is in their case a professional duty, and that every man of them carries his little hammer, we trust there will be no occasion for knocking. Toronto prides herself on her accommodation for visitors. The folded and faulted structure, well furnished with conglomerate beds, are so numerous that they are not likely to pinch out on this occasion, and no distinguished guest need anticipate exposure to any sharp anticline. We are sure the visitors will be suitably entertained by the city's representatives in the official strata, for which purpose a sufficiency of palaeozoic rocks will be appropriated, and it may therefore be confidently anticipated that all connected with the convention may have a very gneiss time.